



Sophora longicarinata

Common Name(s):

Limestone Kowhai

Current Threat Status (2012):

Naturally Uncommon

Distribution:

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Takaka hill and immediate environs, Arthur Range and western Marlborough)

Habitat:

Lowland to montane. A basicole growing confined to base-rich soils derived from marble and limestone parent materials. It grows on ledges and in crevices on limestone and marble outcrops, among boulders, rock debris, and rubble surrounding these outcrops, in gullies with deeper soils, and on alluvium over-lying marble rock.

Features*:

Shrub or tree lacking juvenile growth habit. Shrub with branches often originating at or below ground level, sometimes with rhizomatous shoots; tree with single and stout main trunk or several smaller stems originating from near or below ground level. Branchlets hairy, becoming glabrous with age. Leaves up to 140 mm long, imparipinnate, with 35–52 leaflets; rachis sparsely to densely hairy; immature and developing leaves moderately to densely hairy. Mature leaflets 3.3–5.8 × 2.5–3.1 mm, orbicular, obovate, to oblong-obovate, overlapping to distant on rachis; margin glabrous; apex obtuse to retuse; upper surface dark green, glabrous to sparsely hairy; lower surface light green, sparsely hairy to moderately hairy; petiolule <0.5 mm long, glabrous to moderately hairy. Inflorescences in racemes, with up to 7 flowers; rachis 17–25 mm long, moderately to densely hairy, hairs brown; pedicel 20–40 mm long, often twisted but usually straightening at maturity, moderately to densely hairy, hairs yellow-brown to brown. Calyx 10–14 mm long, 11–14 mm wide, shallowly lobed at rim; moderately to densely hairy, hairs yellow-brown to brown. Flowers yellow; keel petals 35–50 × 6–11 mm, wing petals 32.0–40.0 × 5.5–10.0 mm, standard petal 25–33 × 16–20 mm; petals with claws 4–10 mm long; ovary densely hairy, hairs off-white; filaments 30–45 mm long, anthers 1.5–2.5 mm long. Fruit 70–160 mm long. Seeds 6–8 × 5–6 mm, oblong, yellow to yellow-brown.

Flowering:

October – January

Fruiting:

December – November

Threats:

A naturally uncommon, range restricted species that is sparsely distributed within its mainly marble and limestone rock habitats. Goats are a problem at some locations and a few others have been damaged by plantation forestry but overall this species seems secure.

*Attribution:

Description from Heenan et al. (2001).

References and further reading:

Anonymous. 1944. Kowhai. *Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin*, 9: 4-5

Heenan, P.B. 1997: Reinstatement of *Sophora longicarinata* (Fabaceae – Sophoreae) from northern South Island, New Zealand, and typification of *S. microphylla*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 36: 369–379.

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=686



Caption: Close up - *Sophora longicarinata*

Photographer: Simon Walls